



NEWSLETTER

SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF THE MILITARY



RAPID CITY TO HONOR VETERANS

There's a phrase "Sometimes I just look up, smile, and say 'thank you.'" That phrase comes to mind when you think about Rapid City's honoring veterans banner projects.

Starting on September 24th, 98 (five foot by two foot) banners and 46 (three foot by two foot) banners honoring veterans going back as far as the Civil War will be on display.

The display will start on Main Street (at the corner of Main and East Boulevard), and proceed west from there and then come back on Saint Joseph Street heading east. They will also be hanging them along the Memorial Walkway from the City Administration Building on the corner of 6th & Omaha Street north to the Civic Center.

The banners afford everyone the opportunity to step back and thank veterans for their services to this great country.

Our hats off to Bill Casper for overseeing this project. Bill is well known for his annual luncheon honoring World War II Veterans.



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VA RECOGNIZES SEPTEMBER AS SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH

In observance of Suicide Prevention Month, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) encourages veterans, community leaders, co-workers, families and friends to #BeThere — to help prevent suicide — by being present, supportive and strong for those who may be going through a difficult time.

As part of this approach, the VA is working closely with The White House and other partners to implement the [President's Roadmap to Empower Veterans and End a National Tragedy of Suicide](#) or PREVENTS.

"This September, and all year, I encourage everyone to take a moment to be there for veterans in need," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "One act of thoughtfulness can make a big difference and may even save a life. That's why, the VA is proud to work on initiatives like PREVENTS, to prevent suicide and find innovative ways to deliver support and care to all 20 million U.S. Veterans whenever and wherever they need it,"

The PREVENTS roadmap, initiated by an executive order signed by President Trump in March 2019, will serve as an important tool for promoting research, community engagement — and collaboration in the public and private sector — and ultimately, for ending veteran suicide.

Suicide is a complex, national public health issue that affects communities nationwide, with more than 45,000 Americans, including more than 6,000 veterans, dying by suicide every year.

Suicide is preventable, and special training is not needed to prevent suicide. Everyone can play a role by learning to recognize warning signs, showing compassion to veterans in need and offering support. Listed are actions anyone can take to **Be There**:

- Reach out to Veterans to show them you care. Send a check-in text, cook them dinner or simply ask, "How are you?"
- Learn the warning signs of suicide, found on the [Veterans Crisis Line website](#).
- Watch the free [S.A.V.E. training video](#) to equip yourself to respond with care and compassion if someone you know indicates they are having thoughts of suicide.
- Check out [VA's Social Media Safety Toolkit](#) to learn how to recognize and respond to social media posts that may indicate emotional distress, feelings of crisis or thoughts of suicide.
- Contact VA's [Coaching Into Care](#) program when worried about a Veteran or loved one. A licensed psychologist or social worker will provide guidance on motivating your loved one to seek support.

Learn more about the **#BeThere** campaign and access resources to help support Veterans at [BeThereForVeterans.com](#).

Veterans who are in crisis or having thoughts of suicide, and those who know a veteran in crisis, can call the Veterans Crisis Line for confidential support available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. Call 800-273-8255 and Press 1, text to 838255 or chat online at [VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat](#).



PERKINS COUNTY NAMES KELLER VSO

Bridget Keller, of Bison, has been named the new Perkins County Veterans Service Officer. Keller takes the place of Loyson Carda who recently retired.

The Perkins County VSO office will be open on Mondays and Thursdays from 8:00 am-5:00 pm. Her office is located in the court house on East Main Street. Her office phone number is 605-244-7299 and her email address is: perkinscountyvso@sdplains.com.

Please join SDDVA in welcoming Bridget to our partnership.



FEDERAL AGENCIES PARTNER TO EXPAND EMPLOYMENT REINTEGRATION GRANTS

The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) collaborated in August to successfully roll out the recently expanded [Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program \(HVRP\)](#), which will help more than 18,000 homeless and at-risk veterans secure meaningful employment and stable housing.

HVRP grants in excess of [\\$48 million](#) were awarded to 149 community organizations, serving more veterans than ever before.

"In order to stay securely housed, most Americans, including veterans, need employment to support themselves and their families," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "VA, DOL, USICH and our community partners are dedicated to helping homeless and at-risk veterans access job opportunities that aid them in exiting or avoiding homelessness."

The [recent legislation](#) expands program eligibility to include:

- Veterans who, upon enrollment in HVRP, were homeless at any point during the preceding 60 days but have found housing.
- Veterans participating in the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development-VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) Program, Tribal HUD-VASH or VA Supportive Services for Veteran Families Programs.
- Veterans who are receiving assistance under the Native American Housing Assistance and Self Determination Act of 1996.
- Veterans who are incarcerated or who are transitioning from incarceration.

Through HVRP, eligible veterans receive employment training, transportation, professional clothing, apprenticeship opportunities, on-the-job training as well as job search and placement assistance. VA can also help these veterans access medical care and permanent housing through a partnership with HUD.

"The Department of Labor is proud to work with VA and USICH to help end veteran homelessness," said Acting Secretary of Labor Patrick Pizzella. "We must ensure that those who served our country have a country that helps serve them."

The collaborative effort between VA, DOL and USICH includes informational sessions and webinars for grant awardees, VA staff and community partners to learn how to improve employment outcomes for eligible veterans using these programs. The grants were awarded to non-profit organizations nationwide, such as state and local workforce investment boards, tribal governments and faith-based organizations.

"This interagency collaboration will help ensure that veterans who are at risk, or who are currently or recently homeless, find employment success," said USICH Executive Director Matthew Doherty. "The expanded eligibility for the HVRP program supports nationwide efforts to help veterans move quickly into housing that becomes their springboard for achieving their goals for themselves and their families."

HVRP is the only federal program that focuses exclusively on the employment of veterans who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Initially authorized under Section 738 of the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act, HVRP and its companion programs are currently authorized under Title 38 U.S.C. Sections 2021, 2021A, and 2023.

HIGH FIVE TOUR DELIVERS

Wounded Warriors Family Support has a long history of helping and thanking our veterans. This year, through their High Five Tour, their support is given to Purple Heart Recipient and South Dakota Vietnam War Veteran Jack Gill.

During the WWFS tour they drive a brand-new special mobility-equipped Ford F-150 Raptor from Ford dealership to dealership across the country.

It's a great opportunity to raise awareness about the sacrifices made by the men and women that serve.

Gill is being awarded this truck for his years of service to our country. Gill was injured when he



stepped on a land mine and lost both of his legs. He has been in his wheelchair since 1969, a pair of wheels given as a constant reminder of his brave act, but this new set as a giant thank you for that same act.

You can learn more about the High Five Tour by visiting the [Wounded Warriors Family Support's website](#). Their mission is to provide support to the families of those who have been wounded, injured or killed during combat operations. The families of our casualties suffer in many ways: some financially, some psychologically.



VETERANS DAY AT THE FAIR



This year's South Dakota State Fairgoers had numerous opportunities to thank veterans for their service. On Wednesday and Thursday evenings during the annual Bull Bash, Red Wilk and his team honored numerous veterans. To date he has honored over 150 veterans from all wars and eras.

Thursday morning during the "Salute to Veterans" program, Governor Noem and SDDVA Secretary Greg

Whitlock shared the podium in separate messages thanking veterans and their families for their commitment, dedication and support. Later in the program Red Wilk of Huron and Lance Carson of Mitchell were recognized by the South Dakota Veterans Council and the State Fair Commission for their unending support of veterans.

Red was presented the "2019 Chet Sorenson Veteran of the Year Award" and Lance was presented the "2019 Bob Duxbury Award."

Throughout the four days of the Fair, SDDVA Staff and representatives of the veterans service organizations manned the Veterans Building and were on hand to thank veterans and their families for their service and assist them with issues relating to their benefits.



DID YOU KNOW

- Did you know a new perpetual wall is now up at Indian Springs Park in Spearfish, in honor of active military members and those who have served?
- Did you know that South Dakota's rural electric cooperatives donated \$47,500 to the State Veterans Cemetery Endowment Fund?
- Did you know that the 15th Annual 727th DAV charity poker run raised over \$42,000 to support the veterans transportation program?
- Did you know that ground was broken this week for a Veterans Affairs Clinic in Aberdeen?
- Did you know that the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home will celebrate their 130th anniversary on September 20th?
- Did you know that the groundbreaking ceremony for the new state veterans cemetery will be held on September 9th?
- Did you know that the welcome home ceremony for the Mission Five Midwest Honor Flight will be held on September 24th at 8:45 pm?



VA TO AWARD NEW GRANTS

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) will award \$30 million under the new Grant and Per Diem (GPD) program Oct. 1, to 128 organizations to provide wraparound supportive services to veterans who were previously homeless or at-risk of losing their housing.

The GPD case management grants improve housing retention among formerly homeless veterans by providing an array of individualized services that promote housing stability.

The GPD case management grant program funds community organizations that provide these veterans with resources, referrals and services, such as home visits to monitor their tenant responsibilities. This can include help with managing finances, using public transportation, planning meals and more. The grants were open to applications from organizations in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. A list of grantees is available at <https://www.va.gov/homeless/gpd.asp>.

Recipients competed for the case management grants under a Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) published March 21. The funding will support case management services from Oct. 1, 2019, to Sept. 30, 2021. This NOFA was the first for this new grant program, which was authorized under Public Law 114-315.

The VA also recently renewed \$2.4 million for 11 GPD special needs grants to fund operational costs for community organizations that serve the most vulnerable veterans.

To learn more about the case management and special need grants available through the Grant and Per Diem program visit www.va.gov/homeless/gpd.asp.

Groundbreaking Ceremony for
South Dakota State Veterans Cemetery
Monday, September 9, at 9:00 am (CT)



Directions —

If traveling on I-229 North: Take I-229 North until it ends and turns into Jim Zweep Highway. Approximately a quarter mile north turn right onto Slip Up Creek Road. Follow Slip Up Creek Road until you see the entrance to the cemetery land.

If you're traveling on I-90: Whether traveling East or West on I-90 take the Cliff Avenue Exit (Exit 399) and head North. Travel North approximately three miles to 258th Street. Turn Right heading East on 258th St. Approximately two miles East turn right on to 477th Ave heading South. Travel South approximately one-and-a-half miles and the cemetery property will be on your right.

Good tip for the event — please remind anyone attending to pack their lawn chairs for the groundbreaking. A limited amount of chairs will be available for the speakers and for those with mobility issues.





Sep 9—SD State Veterans Cemetery Groundbreaking—9:00 am (CT)
Sep 12—SD Veterans Commission Conf. Call Meeting—4:00 pm (CT)
Sep 20—Veterans Stand Down—Sioux Falls (3601 S. Minnesota Avenue)—9:00 am—1:00 pm (CT)
Sep 14—SDSU 2nd Annual Veterans Affairs Golf Tournament—Edgebrook Golf Course—Brookings—8:00 am (CT)
Sep 21—SFVAHCS Whole Health Class—Sioux Falls Vet Center (3200 W. 49th Street)—9:00 am—11:00 am (CT)
Sep 21—Davison County Veterans Wellness and Benefit Fair—Mitchell Corn Palace—8:00 am—4:30 pm (CT)
Sep 21—EAFB Health and Wellness Expo
Sep 21-22—SD American Legion Golf Tournament—Hartford Golf Course
Sep 24—Midwest Honor Flight Mission 5 Welcome Home Ceremony—Sioux Falls Convention Center Arena—8:45 pm (CT)—doors open at 7:15
Nov 2—Second Annual Hangar Dance (Midwest Honor Flight Benefit)—Mid America Museum of Aviation—Sioux City, IA—7:00 pm (CT)
Dec 3—Governor Noem's Budget Address
Jan 14—State of the State Address
Jan 15—SD Veterans Council Legislative Reception
Mar 27-29—SD Vietnam and Era Veterans Reunion—Dakota Sioux Casino—Watertown

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